

A

# REVIEW

## OF THE

# STATE

## OF THE

# ENGLISH NATION.

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Thursday, November 14. 1706.

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**I**N my last I debated the Safety of the Church of *Scotland* on the Foot of the Union, in Opposition to some People, who are willing to amuse them with Dangers, from the Possibility of the *English* oppressing them by the Majority of Votes in the Parliament of *Britain*; and previous to this I have laid down, first, that they are not safe in the present Constitution; and secondly, that they are effectually secur'd by the Union.

If the Church of *Scotland* is now in a precarious, unsafe and unsettled Condition, and may be secur'd by the Union; then the Members of this Church can no more ask me, what they gain by the Union, nor answer it to their Consciences or their Posterity, that they should oppose her Settlement in this the Day of her Establishment.

But, say the Gentlemen, that in Behalf

of the Church of *Scotland*, argue against the Union as now propos'd; *We in Scotland are equally unsafe by the Union*, for we are depriv'd of our Parliament, and deliver'd over to the Parliament of *England*, and we do not know but such a Time may come, when the Parliament of *England*, whose Constitution is wholly Episcopal, may vote our Church down, and erect the Episcopal Church of *England*, as the Establishment of great *Britain*; putting us off in *Scotland* with a Toleration, which also they may, by an Occasional Bill, reduce again to any thing they please.

This I take to be the Sum and State of the Question; for really what the other Party objects, in my Opinion, carries with it no Weight.

To argue, what an *English* or *British* Parliament may do, and what they may not

not do, seems to me to be so conjectural, that it leaves no Room to call it an Argument. And let my Opinion go which Way it will, a Probability bias which Way it will, this will follow; 'tis as possible, and I must ask Pardon for thinking that 'tis more probable, a Scots Parliament may be obtain'd to ruin Presbytery, than an *English*.

And I shall turn the very same Arguments that are us'd against this Matter, upon the Gentlemen that use them; thus.

The strong Reasons given, why an *English* Parliament may do thus, are such as these.

The great Interest of the Church of *England*, and her Influence in the Parliament; Her having prevail'd to continue the Test-Act, impose it on the *Irish Dissenters*, and attempt it on the Colonies; Her Power to influence Elections in both Kingdoms; the Nearness to carrying the Occasional Bill; Her strong Struggles for it; the Baseness to bribe or take off the 45 Scots Members, &c.

The Reasons, why there is no Danger from a Scots Parliament, are such as these.

That the Act making it Treason to impugn any Article of the Claim of Right, makes it dangerous to attempt it in the Parliament of *Scotland*.

That the Nobility and Gentry of *Scotland* are too sensible of the Calamities formerly brought upon the Nation, and have suffer'd too much by them, to offer at embroiling the Nation again upon that Account.

That the Example of the Parliament chosen after King *William's* Death, is an Argument for this, in which an Author says, there were more *High-Churchmen* elected, than in any other Parliament since the Restoration; who were so far from removing Episcopacy, that they would not allow the Episcopal Clergy that Toleration, they petitioned for.

This, as the Sum of the projected Disparity, is, what is now offer'd upon this Head, which in short I abridge thus, 'Tis a Comparison of Probabilities.

That 'tis probable both from Circumstances and Examples, that the *English* Parliament may undo the Church-Settlement of *Scotland*; but 'tis not probable, the Parliament of *Scotland* can do it.

This I desire to speak briefly to; and if I should chance to turn the Scale of Probabilities against them, then I leave it to its Consequences; whether the World will not give it against those Gentlemen, who with their imperfect Union, are for leaving Us just where they found Us, or worse.

That the Parliament of *England* is compos'd of *Churchmen*, is true; and that the Parson's, who not near 10000, as is said, Vote, and the Church may influence very much, is all true; and yet under all this, and under such Reigns, as in which the *Dissenters* in *England* have been most hated, they could never obtain any effectual Law to suppress them: And at last the Power of Truth, and the Reason and Nature of things so prevail'd, that the *Dissenters* are not only secured, but the whole Nation is come over to them in the Doctrines of Government, Right and Liberty.

The *Dissenters* are not gone back an Inch, but the Church alarm'd of their Persecutions and Oppressions, which like *Extravagant* Motions always revolve of course to *Regularities* and more natural Rules, return'd again by Length of Time to her self, and own'd her Error, declar'd Persecution against her Principles, and freely fell in with Toleration and Liberty.

They see, the *Dissenters* and the Church have but one civil Interest, and that Liberty is the Safety of both; they are convinc'd, not conquer'd; reduc'd, not by Power or Party, but by the Nature of things, they come to their Senses again.

After this, upon another Sally under a *High-Church Ministry*, the Test was foisted upon the *Dissenters* in *Ireland*; and some Extravagancies acted in *England*: But mark, how soon did these Attempts in the Authors blow up the Ministry, and meer Nature bring all things to rights again.

To instance in the Attempts of the Colonies, which is the Story of *Carolina*, methinks is very odd, since to read the Misfortune of my L—G—le on that Head, with what Contempt he has been treated, and how mortified for offering such a thing, but on a poor handful of Planters; methinks I say, it should strangely weaken the Arguments of those, who seem to suggest these things.

M I S-



## MISCELLANEA.

I Would not be thought to banter my Native Country, when I am repeating the Charge laid on them of National Sins, and tho' I may be a little merry with the Man, yet upon my Word, I am not at all so with the Subject; the crying National Sins of *England* of a Nature too serious for me to jest with.

Nor is it a small Matter, Gentlemen, when I tell you, what Use other People make of this very Argument against us, let it be never so much a Scandal upon us; yet if at the same time any part of it be true, look ye to that!

I allow, that in comparing Nation and Nation, *England* can by no means pass with me for one of the worst; and I am very apt to have a mean Opinion of the Sincerity of that Person or Nation, that sets up for so much valuable Sanctity, as not to touch with their Neighbours for Fear of Infection.

However, if the common Character of *England* be such as is here represented, 'tis very good to be guarded with Virtue, since Men that want in themselves, will make it a Plea in the World, why we should not confederate with Nations, particularly scandalous in their Morals.

I believe, a great many People in *England* will hardly believe, that their Country deserves the Character of a Land of Vice.——A Nation, that sober reform'd People ought rather to stand at a Distance, and wait the Judgments of God upon, than confederate with; I therefore present them with this for reflection, and to give them a View, of what Opinion the World has of them, whatever Opinion they have of themselves.

Reformation of Manners is certainly the Glory of a Nation, and I must do *Scotland* that Justice, that generally speaking, they have a greater Victory over reigning open and authoriz'd Crime, than *England*; but I shall not go the Length of his Author, who, in pursuing his Argument upon *England*'s Crimes, has the following *Addenda* to his former black Charge upon us.

“ It here also deserves Notice, with what excellent Effects God hath blessed the Societies for Reformation of Manners, lately erected in *Scotland*, and especially at *Edinburgh*; Whereas the Spots of Vice are so much more violent in *England*, that the like Societies, of much longer Continuance, and with far greater Advantages, have been able to make no Manner of sensible Alteration in *London*.

“ As to the Circumstances of *England*, with Respect to the so great abounding of gross Sins in Practice, and damnable Errors in Principle, threatened by the Word of God with the most severe Punishments; if true National Repentance and Reformation do not prevent them, I have often had this Reflection, which I have told to some, and do now publicly declare, having the Witness of God in my Conscience, that I speak no otherwise, than as I sincerely think.

“ That if a Choice were in my Offer to have settled upon my Posterity, five thousand Pound Sterling yearly in *England*, or to have five hundred Pounds so settled upon them in *Scotland*; I would in Consideration of the Duty I owe them, and in Consideration of the Sins of *England*, damnable Errors, mighty Temptations to both, and the impending Judgments from the Truth of God's Word, for and upon them; and what I still see of the more favourable Influence of the Providence of God, and better Ground of Hopes, yet remaining as to *Scotland*——I would, I say, in my free Choice, certainly prefer on these Accounts, the five hundred Pound Sterling Settlement in *Scotland*, to the five thousand Pounds in *England*.

Thus, Gentlemen, you see, what a low Ebb the Immoralities of *England* have brought her Reputation to, and what a Condition we are in, as to the Opinion of other Nations.

There



There are a great many Speculations, which this Matter would lead me to ; but I shall only turn it to this one here ; that 'tis pity we are no better, and I wish, every body would help to recover the lost Reputation of *England*, by mending one.

Reformation of Manners has indeed been too much the Jest of this Age, and the most Noise have been made about it, that I have ever found——I wish, those Gentlemen, who are the best Judges of Manners, and in whose Power it is to regulate it, would begin at the Sanctuary, I mean, reform themselves, and then proceed thro' all the Streets of *Jerusalem*, and purge us from secret Vice first, and publick Vice will fall of Course.

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